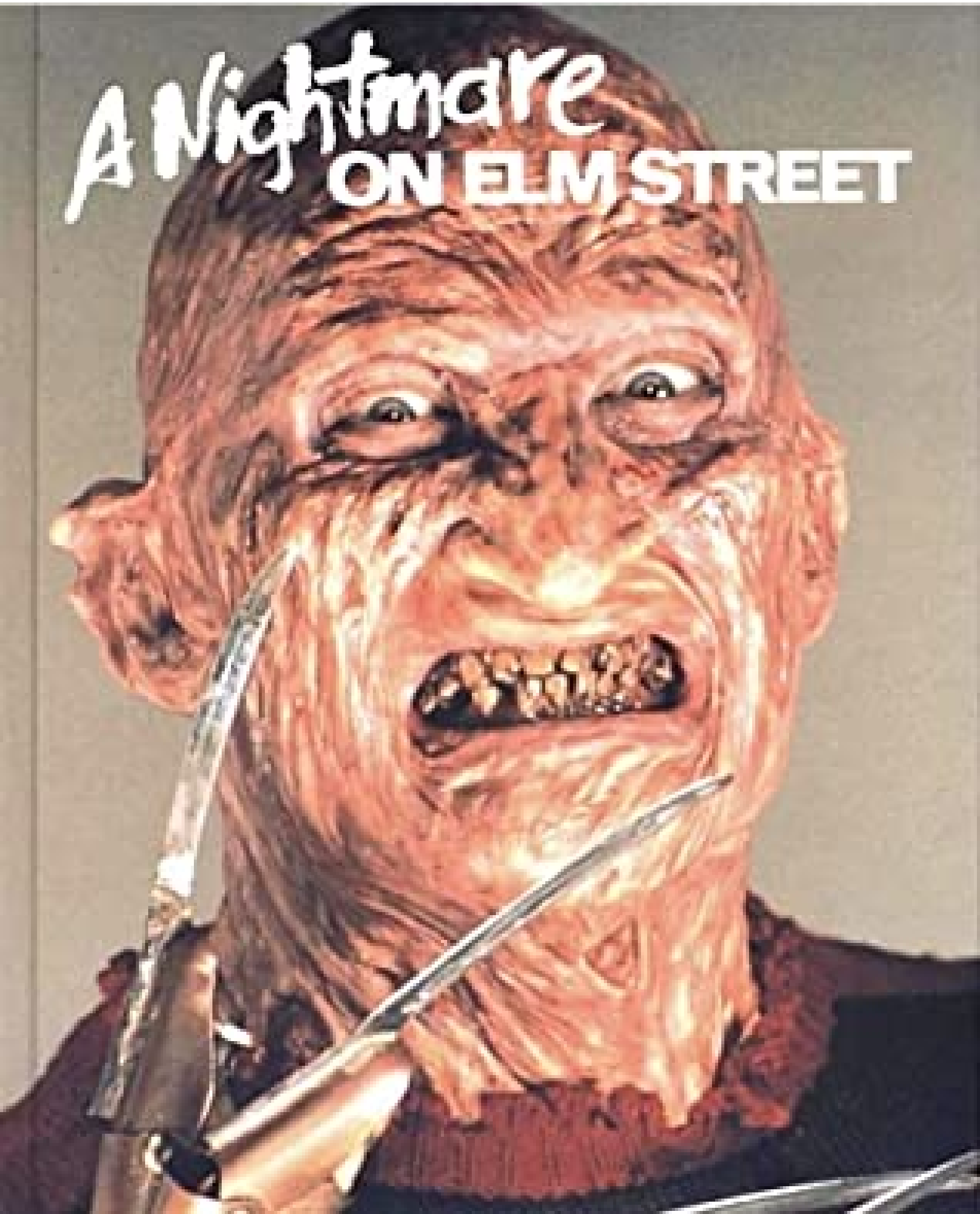


A Nightmare ON ELM STREET



Abdo & Daughters Presents

A Nightmare On Elm Street

Written by: Wes Craven

Adapted by: Bob Italia

Based on the characters created by Wes Craven

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A Nightmare on Elm Street / created by Wes Craven ; written by Wes Craven ; adapted by Bob Italia ; [edited by New Line Cinema].

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Adaptation of motion picture.

Summary: Nightmares shared by several teenagers in a neighborhood become reality when they're stalked by a disfigured man who has knives for fingernails.

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One

Tina's steps quickened as she made her way down the darkened corridor. She could hear insane laughter in the distance, and the slamming of iron doors. Suddenly, a lamb skittered across her path and into the dark.

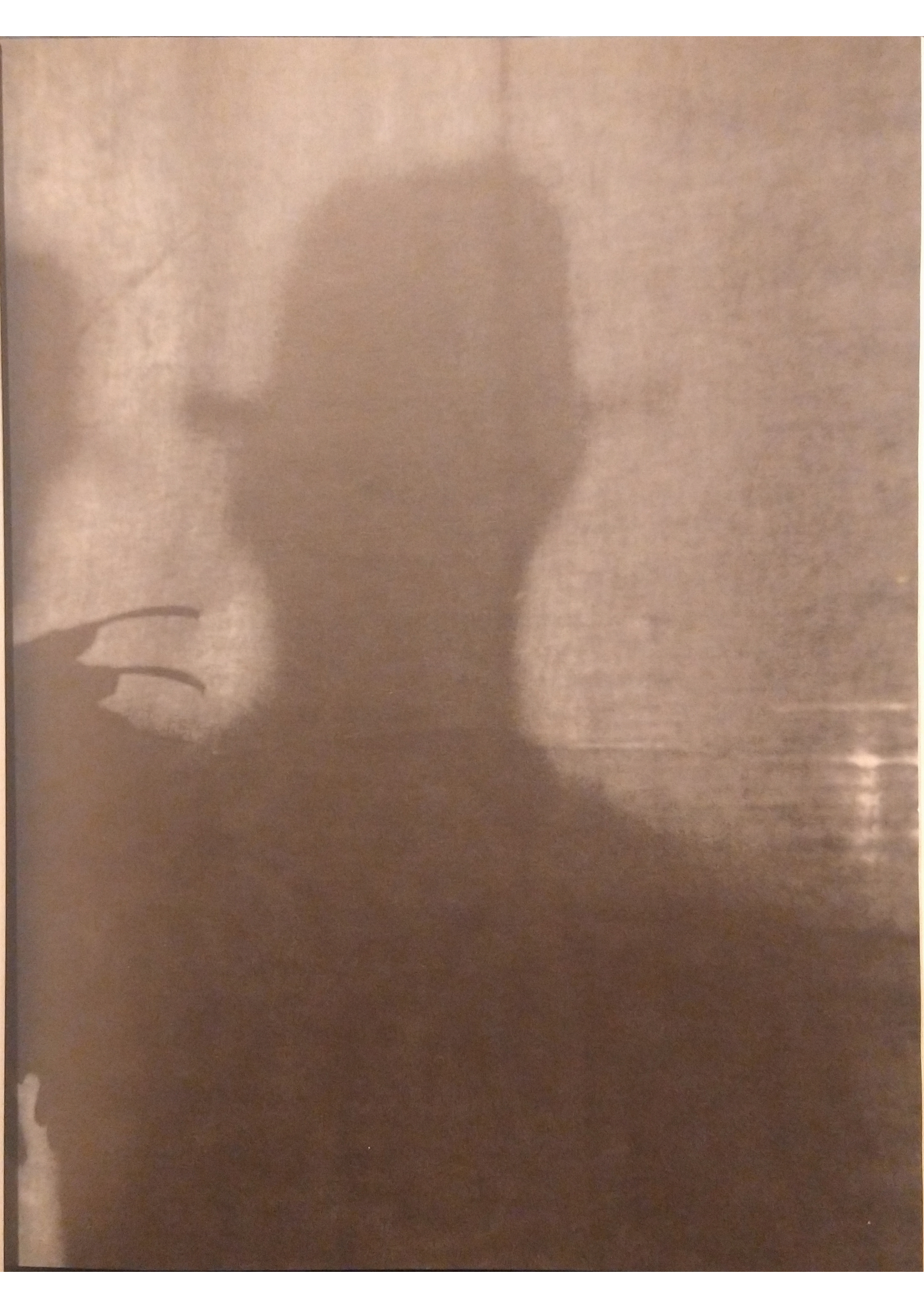
Then she heard another sound, much nearer! It was the slithering scrape of something that sounded like fingernails across slate. Panic-stricken, Tina began running.

Tina found herself running among huge boilers, steam pipes, and catwalks. She stopped and listened to more strange sounds—the sound of tiny hooves and the rattle of distant rain.

Then she heard ripping fabric. Someone was shouldering behind a ragged screen of dirty canvas, approaching Tina.

Suddenly, long curved fingerblades punched through and began ripping the canvas with a hideous tearing sound. Tina stumbled backward, hands over her ears.

All grew quiet as the fabric flapped free. Then a deep, ragged voice whispered to Tina: "One, two, Freddy's coming for you."



Tina opened her mouth to scream, but only a dry, yellow dust poured out. Just then, a huge shadowy man with a grimy red and black sweater and a weird hat pulled over his scarred face lunged at her. His fingers were tipped with long blades of steel.

Tina dodged the menacing figure, but the man seized the trailing hem of her nightgown and began hauling her back. Tina shrieked in terror...

...then she woke to the sound of someone knocking on her bedroom door.

Tina's mother poked her head in. "You okay, Tina?" she said with a worried look.

Tina looked around wildly, then sat up and sighed deeply. "Just a dream, ma," she said.

Tina's mother stepped into the room and gazed at her. "Some dream, judging from that," she said.

Tina looked down at her nightgown. There were four long slashes up its middle, as if cleanly cut by scalpels.

"You gotta cut your nails or stop that kind of dreaming, Tina," her mother said. "One or the other." She left the room and closed the door behind her.

Instantly, Tina snatched the cross that hung over her bed and clutched it to her chest. Her face was as white as her sheets.

§

The next morning, Tina drove to school with her best friend, Nancy, and Nancy's boyfriend, Glen. When they arrived, several gradeschoolers were playing jump-rope in the parking lot.

"Seven, eight," they sang, "gonna stay up late! Nine, ten—never sleep again!"

Tina was amazed. "That's what it reminded me of," she told Nancy and Glen. "That old jump-rope song!" She shuddered. "Worst nightmare I ever had. You wouldn't believe it!"

Nancy nodded. "As a matter of fact, I had a bad dream last night myself."

"So what did you dream?" Tina asked.

"Forget it," Nancy replied. "The point is, everybody has nightmares once in a while. No biggie."

"Next time you have one," Glen said, "just tell yourself that's just all it is, right while you're having it, y'know? That's the trick. Once you do that, you wake right up. At least it works for me."

Suddenly, the school bell rang. Glen kissed Nancy and rushed into school.

"Hey," Tina shouted, "you have a nightmare, too?"

The rest of their classmates began crowding them. Tina and Nancy were drawn into the crush.

§

That night, Nancy and Glen came over to Tina's house. They gathered in the living room and sat by the fire.

"Maybe we should call Rod," Nancy said to Tina, "have him come over, too."

"Rod and I are done," Tina said. "He's too much of a maniac."

"He should join the marines," Glen said. "They could make something out of him—like a hand grenade."

Tina and Nancy laughed. "See?" Nancy said. "You've forgotten the bad dream. Didn't I tell you?"

Tina shook her head. "All day long I been seeing that guy's weird face, and hearing those fingernails."

Nancy's eyes widened. "Fingernails? That's amazing! It made me remember the dream *I* had last night!"

Tina looked at Nancy in fright. "What did you dream?"

"I dreamed about this guy in a dirty red and black sweater," she said. "He walked into the room I was in—right through the wall, like it was

smoke or something! He just stared at me, then he walked out through the wall on the other side—like he'd just come to check me out."

The room fell deathly quiet. "So what about the fingernails?" Tina asked meekly.

Nancy stared blankly at Tina. "He scraped his fingernails along things. Actually, they were more like fingerknives or something, like he'd made them himself. Anyway, they made this horrible noise."

Tina's face turned white. "Nancy, you dreamed about the same creep I did!" The girls stared in terror at each other.

"That's impossible!" Glen said. Suddenly, he looked away as if he heard something.

"What?" Tina whispered.

"Nothing," Glen replied unconvincingly.

"There's somebody out there, isn't there!" Tina said.

"I didn't hear anything," Nancy said.

Just then, they heard a distinct scraping against the house, just outside the window. Nancy's mouth opened in horror.

Glen rushed to the front door and opened it. Then he stepped into the night. "I'm gonna punch out your ugly lights, whoever you are!" he shouted. Then he turned to face the girls. "It's just a stupid cat," he said.

Suddenly, the girls screamed as a large figure pounced on Glen, knocking him to the ground. Then the huge figure jumped up. "And it's number thirty-six, Rod Lane," the figure shouted as if he were a sportscaster, "bringing down Glen Lantz just three yards from the goal with a brilliant tackle! And the fans go wild!"

Tina felt relieved. "What are you doing here?"

"Came to make up," Rod said. "No big deal. Your ma home?"

"Of course," Tina said, looking at Rod's hand. "What's that?"

Rod took the spindly hand rake and scraped the house wall. It made a terrible scratching sound. He grinned and tossed the rake aside. "So what's happening?"

"Maybe a funeral, you jerk!" Glen said angrily.

Rod whirled around with a knife in his hand.

"Just a sleep-over date," Nancy said, stepping between Glen and Rod. "Just Tina and me. Glen was just leaving."

Rod stared at Glen and laughed, flipping the knife closed. Then he put it in his pocket. "You ma ain't home, is she?" he said to Tina. "We got stuff to discuss." He walked into the house.

"We should get out of here," Nancy said to Glen.

"Hey, you guys are hanging around, right?" Tina shouted from the door. "I need all the company I can get. Please?"

Glen looked at Nancy. "So we'll guard her together. Why's she so bothered by a stupid nightmare, anyway?"

"Because he was scary," Nancy said, "that's why."

"Who was scary?" Glen asked.

Nancy frowned. "Don't you think it's weird, her and me dreaming about the same guy?"

Glen nervously looked away. Nancy's eyes widened. "You didn't have a bad dream last night, did you?" she said.

Glen flashed a funny look. "Me? I don't dream." Glen followed Nancy to the house. He stopped in the doorway, glanced around with concern, then closed the door and locked it.

Glen slept on the couch while Nancy slept in Tina's bedroom. Tina and Rod slept in twin beds in the master bedroom. Tina was too afraid to be alone.

"You feel better now, right?" Rod said. "No more fights?"

"No more fights," Tina replied.

"Good," Rod said, "no more nightmares for either of us then." He pulled the covers over his head.

Tina frowned. "When did *you* have a nightmare?"

"Guys can have nightmares, too, y' know," he stated. "You ain't got a corner on the market or something." Rod rolled over and pulled another cover over his head—a dirty red and black cover!



Tina sleepily glanced at the cover. "Where'd you get that snotty old thing?" She yawned and turned off the light. Then she pulled her cover over herself.

Meanwhile, in Tina's bedroom, Nancy was sitting up in bed staring at the ceiling. Something troubled her. Her heart was pounding. Nancy sighed, turned on her side, and closed her eyes.

Just then, the ceiling turned a faint reddish hue with a broad yellow smear across its center. The ceiling began to pulse in rhythm with her heartbeat.

Suddenly, something strange pressed against the ceiling. The plaster bulged as if it were elastic—taking the shape of a man's face! The face opened its mouth. Then knives raked through the ceiling. Plaster dust snowed down on Nancy.

Nancy's eyes flew open and she bolted upright. The face disappeared from the ceiling. Nancy touched her hair and felt the plaster dust. Then she looked to the ceiling. There were three parallel cuts in the plaster, about eight inches long. They looked as if they had been cut by sharp knives.

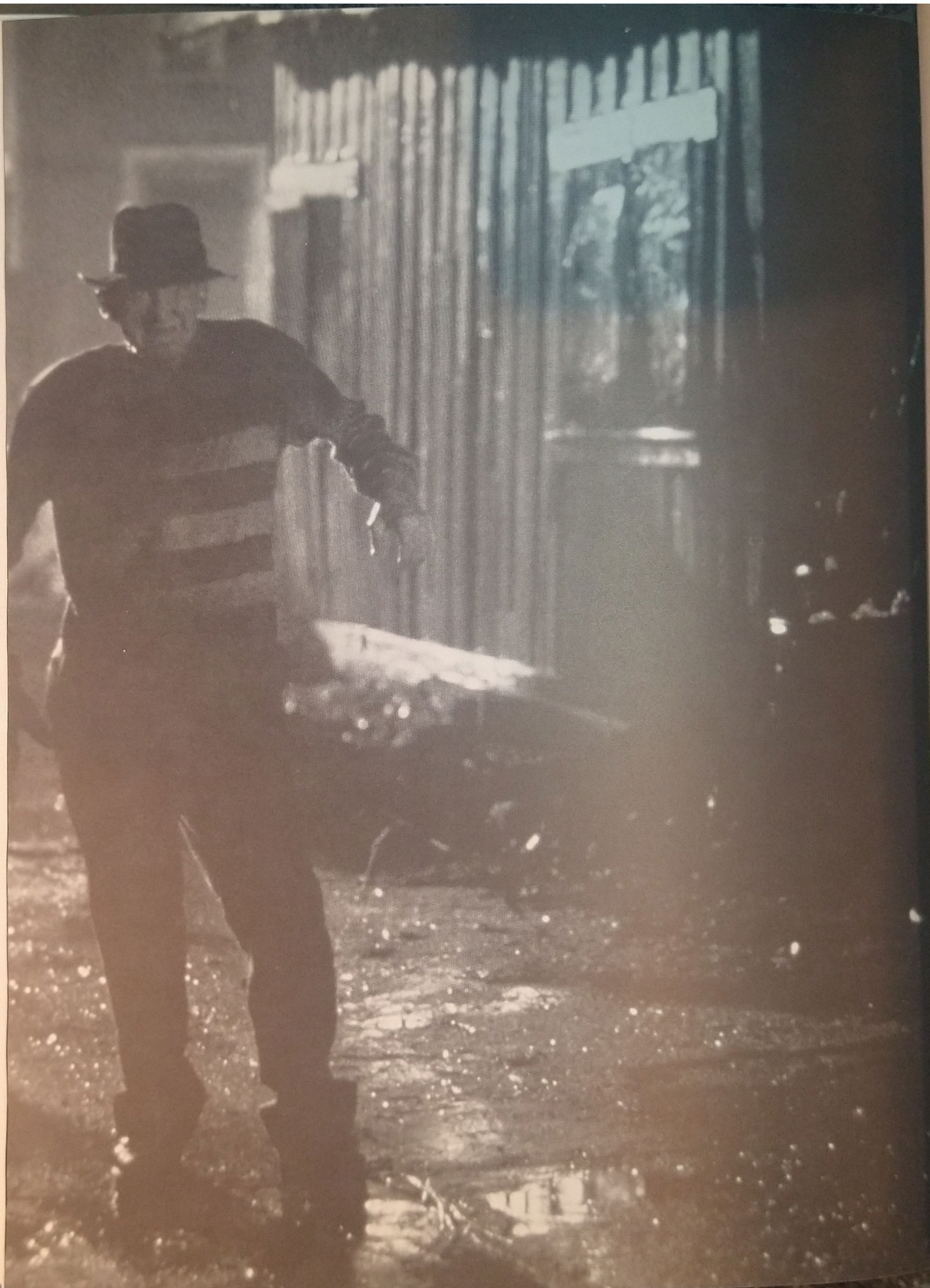
Nancy drew the covers around her tightly and shivered. Her eyes remained wide open.

Back in the master bedroom, Tina was awakened by the sound of a pebble striking the window. She sat up and listened for a moment, then another pebble clattered off the pane. "Rod," she whispered.

Rod was snoring.

Another pebble rapped the glass. Tina slipped to the window and looked out into the back yard. It seemed deserted, but she couldn't tell for sure.

Just then another pebble struck the window sharply. Startled, Tina, jumped back. But then she was drawn to the window out of curiosity, straining to see in the dark. It seemed as if the stones were materializing out of thin air.



Suddenly, a heavier stone struck the window. A thin crack bristled across the glass. Angered, Tina rushed to the back door. She flicked on the flood lights and peered out. "Somebody there?" she cried.

"Tina," the garbled voice said.

Tina straightened, unable to swallow. Then she heard a ragged, obscene giggle.

"Who is that?" she shouted. Tina charged across the yard and through the gate into the alley. Then she stopped and whirled around, listening to the wind. She was in the same slashed nightgown she had worn in her previous nightmare.

At that moment, a shambling man appeared in the alley fifty feet behind Tina. Then he spread his arms wide and started for her, something shining on his right hand. Tina was cut off from her home!

She began shaking uncontrollably. "Oh, please, no," she whimpered. Then the man held up his steel-tipped hand.

Tina turned and ran for her life. The man chased after her. As she ran, Tina overturned trash cans. But the man was fast. The distance between them closed with each heartbeat.

Tina rushed out onto front lawns, screaming for help. But all the porch lights on the block began flicking off. The man roared out from behind a slender tree and nearly caught her. Tina ran in panic all the way to her front door. But the door was locked.

"Nancy! Nancy!" Tina cried as she pounded away. "Open the door!"

"She's still awake," the man said from behind. "Nancy can't hear you."

Tina whirled around and looked at the approaching man. He was big and hideous, and wore the same dirty red and black sweater, sagging hat, and leering grin from the first nightmare. On his fingers were the steel talons.



The man pressed in. Tina staggered backward, her foot caught inexplicably in bedclothes. She fell over her bed's comforter, twisted away from the man and pulled the cover over her.

Suddenly, Rod lurched up in the lightless bedroom, half-awakened by a sick, awful giggle that filled the room, then echoed off into infinity. Frowning, Rod looked around for the phantom. "Tina?" When she didn't reply, he got up and jerked back the bedspread. Then his eyes widened in terror. "NOOOOOOOO!" Rod shouted in anguish.

Rod's cries rang throughout the house. Terrified, Nancy sat up, then bolted from the bed and into the dark hall. She crashed into someone who lurched out of the dark before her. She screamed and jumped back.

"What's going on?" Glen said.

"Oh, jeez—Glen!" Nancy said. "Something's wrong!"

Nancy and Glen rushed to the bedroom door and tried to open it, but the door was locked. "Rod?" Glen shouted, his voice cracking with fear. "Rod, what's happening in there?"

Rod erupted into terrible hoarse laughter and sobbing. Nancy and Glen heard breaking glass. Glen stepped away from the door, then barreled toward it like a football player. The frame splintered from the impact. Nancy and Glen rushed into the room.

The bedroom was quiet as a tomb. Glen found the light switch and flicked on the lights. Nancy saw Tina in the center of the bed. Tina was dead. Nancy turned away and stuck her head out the shattered window Rod had used for his escape. She sucked in the cold night air and moaned.

"I'm....I'm gonna call the cops," Glen said in shock. Then he burst from the room.

Two

Later that night, an unmarked police car sped to the curb outside the police station. Lieutenant Don Thompson emerged and popped a cigarette in his mouth. Officer Parker greeted Thompson. Parker looked shakened.

"Sorry to wake you, Lieutenant," Parker said.

"I'd have canned you if you hadn't," Thompson said. "What you got?"

Parker stumbled to open the door for Thompson as he bulled into the station at a furious pace.

"Her name was Tina Gray," Parker said. "It was her home. Father abandoned ten years ago, mother's in Vegas with a boyfriend. We're trying to reach her now."

Thompson grimaced as he headed toward his office. "What's the Coroner got to say?"

"Something like a razor was the weapon," Parker said, "but nothing found on the scene. Looks like her boyfriend did it. Rod Lane. Musician type, arrests for brawling, dope—"

"Terrific," Thompson snapped. "What was *she* doing there?"

"She lived there," Parker said.

"I don't mean her—" Thompson burst into his office. Nancy and her mother, Marge Simson, were waiting anxiously for him. "What was she doing there?" Thompson said to Marge.

"Hello to you, too, Donald," Marge replied.

All the steam left Thompson. He looked at Nancy and winced. She looked like a wreck. Her skin was clammy and the color of paste. Marge gave her ex-husband a worried glance. Thompson pulled a chair close to Nancy. "How ya doin', pal?" he said softly.

"Okay," Nancy replied. "Hi, dad."

"I don't want to get into this now," Thompson said. "I know you need time. But I sure would like to know what you were doing shackled up with three other kids in the middle of the night—especially with a lunatic like Lane."

"Rod's not a lunatic," Nancy said.

"You got a sane explanation for what he did?" Thompson said.

Nancy stared blankly as she shred a tissue.

"Apparently he was crazy jealous," Marge said. "Nancy said they'd had a fight, Rod and Tina."

"It wasn't that serious," Nancy said softly.

"Maybe you don't think murder's serious," Marge said.

Nancy sat upright, her eyes flashing. "She was my best friend! Don't you dare say I don't take her death seriously! I just meant their fights weren't that serious. She *dreamed* this would happen."

"What?" Thompson said.

"She had a nightmare about somebody trying to kill her, last night" Nancy said tearfully. "That's why we were there. She was afraid to sleep alone."

"She's been through enough for one night," Marge said. "You have her statement."

Nancy and Marge started out. "I suggest you keep a little better track of her," Thompson said. "She's still a kid, you know."

"You think I knew there were boys there?" Marge snapped. "You try raising a teenager alone!" Nancy and Marge left the room.

Thompson glared at Parker. "See that they get home okay."

§

The next morning, Nancy was walking alone down a sidewalk on her way to school. Sensing she was being watched, she looked across the street. A man in dark clothes was holding up a newspaper, staring at her.

Nancy shrugged and continued on, then stopped and looked back. The man was gone.

Suddenly, a bloodied hand clamped over her mouth and dragged her into the bushes. Nancy struggled, twisting against the powerful assailant.

Then Nancy realized it was Rod Lane. He was barefoot, clad only in jeans and leather jacket. His skin was pale as a ghost's.

Rod released her warily. Nancy made no move to run or scream.

"You're old man thinks I did it, don't he?" Rod said.

"He doesn't know you," Nancy said. "Couldn't you change your clothes?"

"The cops were all over my house," Rod replied. "They'll kill me for sure."

"Nobody's going to kill you," Nancy said.

He ran his hands down his face. "I never touched her."

"You were screaming like crazy," Nancy said.

"Someone else was there," Rod stated.

"The door was locked from your side," Nancy said.

Rod grabbed her hard. His muscular body tensed. "Don't look at me like I'm some kind of fruitcake or something."

"Good morning, Mr. Lane," a voice interrupted.

Rod jerked around. Thompson pointed his .38 at Rod's belly. "Now just step away from her, son."

Rod backed away, looking at Nancy with a terrible sadness. Then he dived out of the bushes and began running. Thompson aimed his revolver at Rod—but Nancy jumped between them.

Thompson jerked his gun into the air. "Are you crazy?" he said. Then he rushed after Rod.

Rod raced like a frightened animal across the lawns. But then plain clothes police officers cut him off. Rod scampered away from them, but then two uniformed officers grabbed him and wrestled him to the ground. One officer held Rod's knife in the air for Thompson to see. Then they forced Rod into the squad car.

"I didn't do it!" Rod shouted. "I didn't kill her!" The officer slammed the car door, and took Rod to the police station.



§

Later that day, Nancy was in English class. She was trying to concentrate, but was just too tired. She began nodding off, barely able to keep her eyes open in the warm, close boredom of the classroom. When her cheek rested against the desk, she could hear a sad and distant voice.

"Nancy," Tina said.

Nancy looked through the open doorway of the classroom into the hall. She saw a full-sized, clear plastic body bag. There was movement within.

Nancy slipped from her seat. No one noticed her leaving the classroom. Nancy looked down the hall in each direction. No sign of anybody.

"Nancy," Tina's voice whispered.

Nancy wheeled around and saw the body bag at the far end of the hall. Then a pale hand thrust out of it. Moments later, the bag slid out of sight.

Nancy ran down the hall and around the corner. Then she gazed down a stairwell filled with an orange glow. "Tina?" Nancy said.

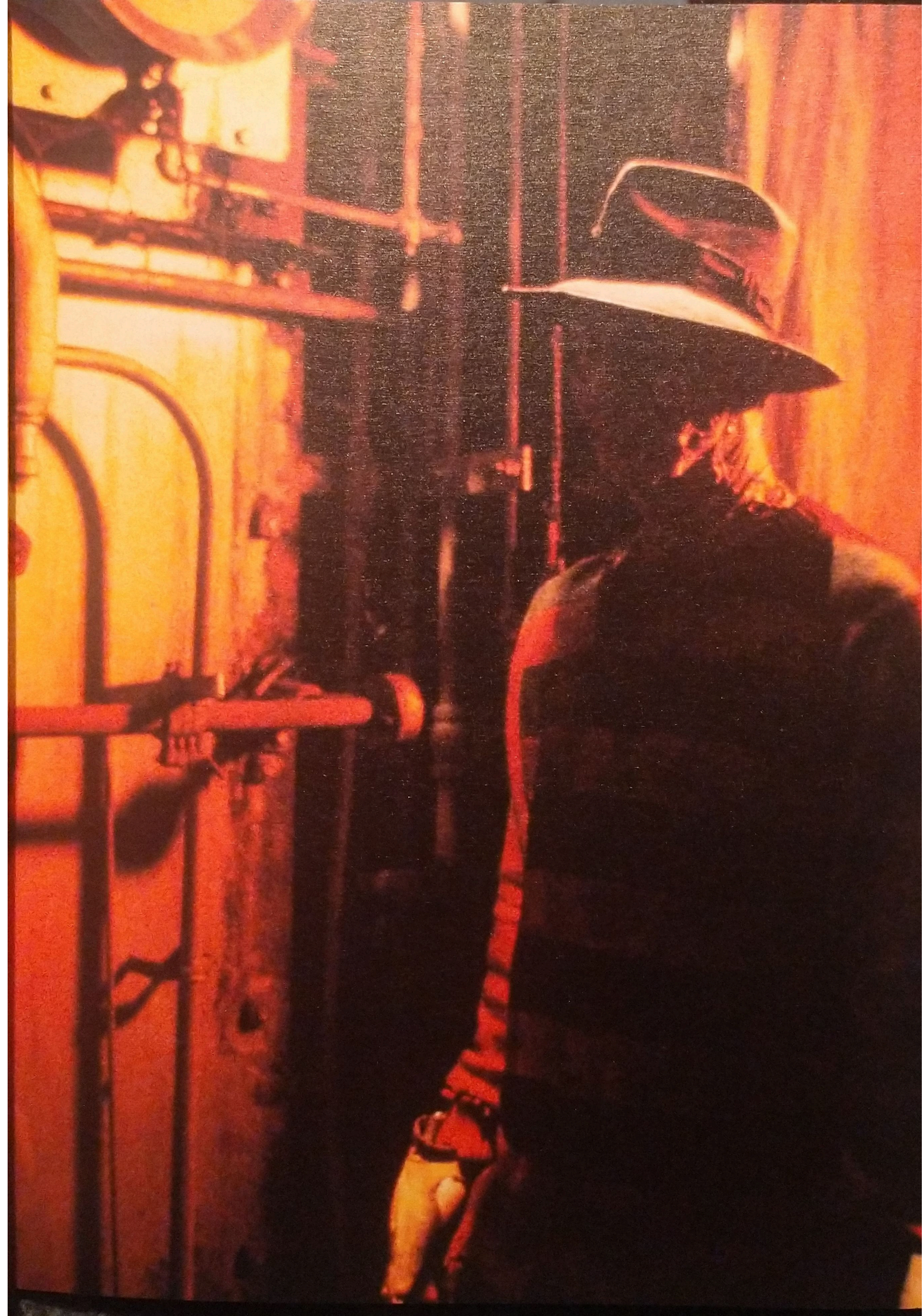
Nancy descended the steps and entered a dank boiler room. A trail of blood ran behind a cracking, red-hot boiler. Terror slowly moved across her face. Then she heard a low, sinister giggle.

Suddenly, Tina's killer stepped from the shadow of tangled pipes. He wore a filthy red and black sweater and slouch hat. His melted face twisted into a smile as he slid the long blades from beneath his shirt and fanned them on the ends of his bony fingers.

"Who are you?" Nancy asked.

"Gonna get you," the leering man replied.

Nancy jerked around and fled in blind panic into the first opening she saw—a dark pipe tunnel. The killer chased after her as Nancy tore ahead into the darkness.



Deeper and deeper she ran into the labyrinth of steaming, sizzling pipes. The killer was just yards behind her. Soon she was trapped, just like Tina was before her.

Nancy pressed her back to the wet bricks as the killer raised his knives to strike. Suddenly, Nancy realized what was happening. She shoved her arm against a scalding steam pipe...

...and she lurched up from her desk screaming, her arms raised to ward off the invisible blow, books clattering to the floor! The other girls nearby shrieked in surprise as Nancy stumbled over her books. Then she stopped, confused and groggy from the nightmare.

Everybody was staring at Nancy as if she had gone mad. The teacher rushed to her side. "Okay—okay, Thompson," the teacher said. "Everything's all right now. Let me call your mother."

"No! No, really, I'm fine," Nancy said, picking up her books. "I'll go straight home. I'm okay."

Shaken, Nancy walked out of the building. Then she paused at a big pine tree and started crying. When she regained composure, Nancy rubbed her arm absently, lost in thought. Then her eyes flew open as she lifted her arm to stare at the spot she touched. There was a burn mark, about the size of a half-dollar. Nancy was utterly and chillingly confused.

Suddenly, Tina appeared out of nowhere. "Couldn't get back to sleep," she said. "What did *you* dream?" Then she was gone.

Nancy walked quickly to her father's police station and entered his office. "Dad, I want to see Rod Lane."

Thompson looked uneasy. "Only family allowed, Nancy. You know the drill."

"I just want to talk to him for a second," she said.

"He's dangerous," her father replied.

"You don't know he did it!"

"No, I know, thanks to your own testimony, that he was locked in a room with a girl who went in alive and came out in a body bag."

Nancy flinched. "I just want to talk to him. Please, Dad."

Thompson's neck grew red. "Make it fast."

Nancy was escorted to Rod's cell. She began talking to him about the night Tina died, then paused as a guard passed by.

"And then what happened?" she said to Rod.

Rod ran his fingers through his wet hair. "I told you. It was dark, but I'm sure there was someone else in there, under the covers with her."

"How could somebody get under the covers with you guys without you knowing it?"

"How do I know?" Rod said. "I don't expect you to believe me."

Nancy studied Rod's eyes, then leaned closer. "What did he look like? Did you get a look at him?"

Rod turned away. "No."

"Well then how can you say somebody else was there?"

Rod smashed his fist against the wall. "I probably could have saved her if I'd moved sooner. But I thought it was just another nightmare, like the one I had the night before. There was this guy who had knives for fingers..."

Nancy swallowed hard as she turned white.

"Do you think I did it?" Rod asked.

"No," Nancy replied.

Three

That night, in Nancy's two-story house on Elm Street, Nancy decided to take a bath. She was so drowsy, she could hardly keep her eyes open. She slowly slid to the surface of the water. Her eyes glazed over and her breathing deepened.

Suddenly, the water rippled. Then something shiny broke the surface—a long thin blade! It began to rise slowly.

Soon there were two gleaming blades. A full-bladed glove and dark hairy hand appeared, then the wrist and arm. The knives blossomed into a bright flower of razor sharp steel. The hand reared back and the claws arched—ready to strike!

Just then, Marge rapped on the door. "Nancy?"

Nancy jerked up, opening her groggy eyes. "What?" she said. The dark wet arm, hand and knives were gone.



"You're not falling asleep, are you?" Marge said. "You could drown, you know."

"Mother, for petesakes."

Marge entered the bathroom and held a towel for Nancy. "To bed with you, c'mon." Nancy rose from the bath and dried herself off. She put on her pajamas and went to bed.

"Here," Marge said, handing her daughter a yellow pill, "take this. It'll help you sleep."

"Right," Nancy said, popping the pill into her mouth.

Marge gave her a kiss on the forehead. "Sleep tight," she said as she started out. "Don't let the bedbugs bite."

When Marge closed the door, Nancy spit the pill into her hand. She tossed it out the window and took a NoDoz. Then she turned on the television. There was no way she was going to sleep.

§

Later that night, Nancy caught herself nodding off. She tumbled out of bed, stuck her head out the open window and took a deep breath of the cool night air.

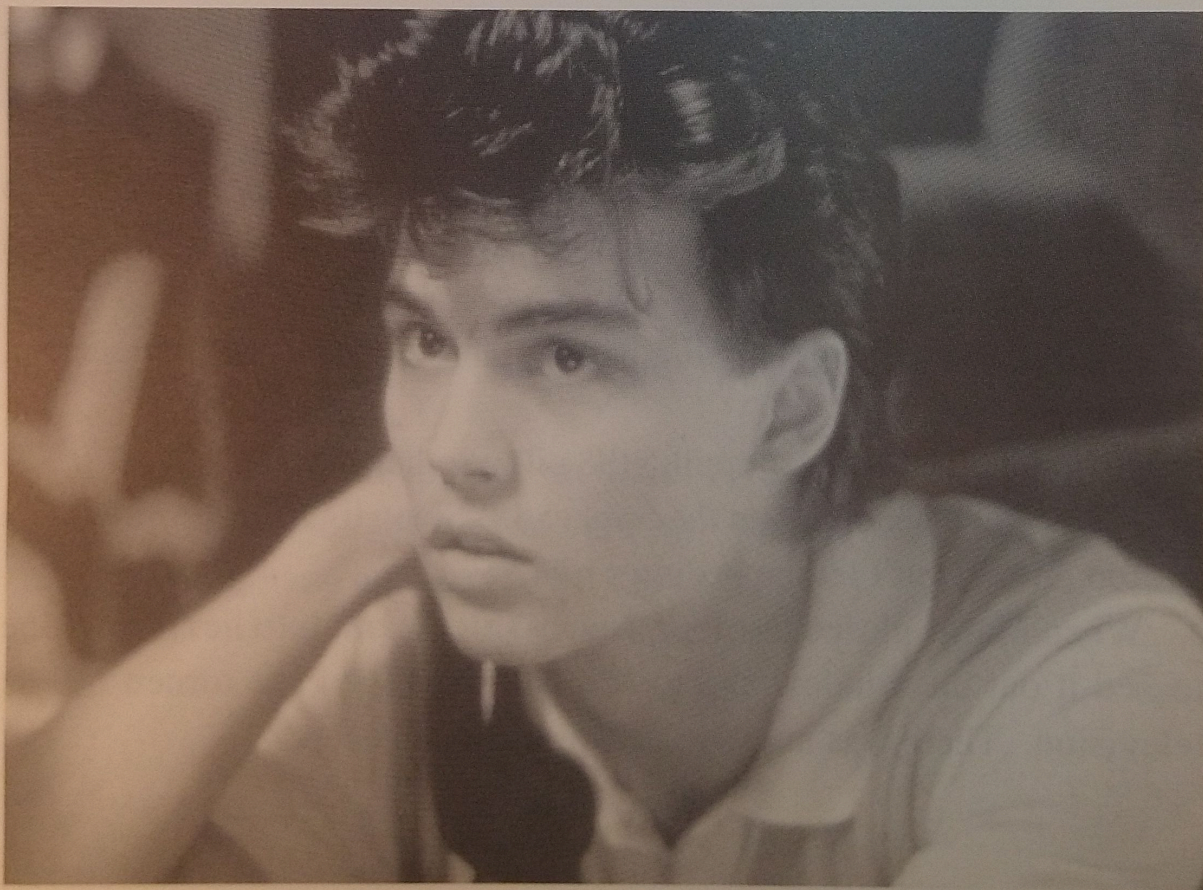
Someone pitched out of the dark at her. Nancy yelped—then clamped her hand over her mouth as she recognized Glen balancing precariously on the rose trellis outside her window.

“Sorry,” Glen said. “I saw your light on. Thought I’d see how you were.”

Nancy sighed with relief. “Sometimes I wish you didn’t live right across the street.”

“Shut up and let me in. You ever stand on a rose trellis in your bare feet?”

Glen climbed through the window and planted himself on the bed. Nancy pointed to the chair. “If you don’t mind,” she said.



Glen crossed the floor to the chair and plopped down. Nancy sat on the bed. "So, I heard you freaked out in English class today," Glen said.

"Guess I did," Nancy replied.

"Haven't slept, have you?"

"Not really." Nancy tried to smile, but couldn't fake it.

"You look dead and rained on, if you want the ugly truth," Glen said. "And what did you do to your arm?"

Nancy shrugged. "Burned myself in English class." She looked in the mirror. Her jaw dropped. "My God, I look twenty years old!" Then she gazed at Glen. "You have any weird dreams last night?"

Glen shook his head. "Slept like a rock."

"You believe in the Boogey Man?"

"One, two, Freddy's coming for you?" Rod replied. "No. Rod killed Tina. He's a fruitcake and you know it."

Nancy thought for a moment. "Listen, I've got a crazy favor to ask. It's nothing hard or anything. I'm just going to look for someone, and I want you to be sort of a guard. Okay?"

"Okay...I think," Glen said.

Nancy took a deep breath and turned off the lights. "Now listen, here's what we're going to do..."

§

Nancy was in her pajamas, walking through the shadowy streets near her home. She peered into the darkness of the lawns and trees behind her. "You still there?" she whispered.

Across the street and a distance away, Glen stepped from behind a tree. "Yeah. So?"

"Just checking," she replied. "Keep out of sight." Nancy looked between the houses, deep into a dark alleyway. Then she forced herself to walk into it.

As Nancy walked deeper and deeper into the shadows, she often paused and waited. She was sure the killer would come screaming out at any second. But Nancy emerged from the far end of the alley unscathed. Now she was across the street from her father's police station.

"Still there?" she whispered.

She heard Glen yawning. "Still here!" he said softly.

Nancy crossed the street and entered another alley. Then she peered into a low, barred basement window. She could see Rod lying on his rough cot, twitching in disturbed sleep.

Suddenly, a long shadow slid across the cell wall. Nancy looked around and saw a big shape in the shadowed corridor. It walked closer and closer to her. Now she could see it was the shambling, grimly scarred man with the filthy red and black sweater and strange slouch hat pulled across his brow. The giant shadow of a man passed through the bars of the cell and approached Rod.

Nancy drew back sharply, swallowing in terror. She looked behind her for help. "Glen!" she shouted.

The street was deserted. There was no motion. All she could hear were the sounds of Glen snoring. Nancy jerked back around and forced herself to look into Rod's cell.

The killer picked up Rod's bedsheet and tested it between his powerful hands. Without thinking, Nancy banged against the glass. "Rod, look out!" she cried.

The killer wheeled around, locking eyes with Nancy. She turned white with fear. The killer's face was horrible—seething with hatred and a twisted, insane intelligence.

The hold of those eyes was broken when Rod rolled up on an elbow with a deep, troubled groan. Suddenly, the killer faded into the shadows of the cell.



Rod looked around his cell groggily, running his fingers through his matted hair. Then he collapsed on the pillow and pulled the twisted covers about his shoulders and succumbed again to deadly sleep.

The bedsheet was no longer on the bed. The killer, materializing out of the shadows, was holding it between his hands like a garrote. He looked up and leered at Nancy, then approached Rod.

Nancy pounded on the window, then turned in frustration. "Glen!" she yelled into the night. Then she turned back to the cell in desperation. The cell was deserted except for Rod who was sleeping peacefully. "Glen!" she shouted. "Glen where are you?"

"I'm here," the deep, ragged voice said.

Nancy twisted around in horror. The killer grabbed for her face with his knife-fingers. Nancy pitched back, then ran for her life. The killer chased after her.

Time after time, Nancy barely eluded the shadowy figure. She was too tired to scream. All she could hear was the sound of running footsteps, her rasping breath and the knife-fingers slashing through the air right behind her.

Nancy made it to Elm Street. She tore across her front lawn and into the open door of her home, slamming it with all her might. "Glen!" she shouted. She heard his distant snoring.

Suddenly, the killer was at the kitchen window prying the glass with his knife-fingers. Nancy ran upstairs in blind panic. She darted into her unlit bedroom, slammed the door, and locked it. Then she listened at the door.

Nothing.

Just then, the killer dived through the window, covering Nancy in a shower of glass. Terrified, she backed into a corner.

The killer stood and approached her. Suddenly, the alarm clock went off with a jarring ring. Now the room was filled with light. Nancy reeled up, screaming and fighting on her bed.

Glen lurched from his sleep at the frightening noise. He saw Nancy pressed in terror against her headboard, clutching a pillow.

Nancy stared in disbelief at Glen, then gazed around the room, untangling herself from her bedclothes. There was no broken glass. Everything was in place. "Glen, you jerk!" she said in a furious and hoarse voice.

Glen looked at her in groggy alarm. "What did I do?"

"I asked you to do just one thing—just stay awake and watch me, just wake me if it looked like I was having a bad dream! But you—what do you do—you fall asleep!"

Suddenly, a white feather floated down in the moonlight. It was sucked out the window and disappeared.

Nancy's eyes widened. "We've got to get to the police station—now!"

§

Glen's red 1959 Cadillac convertible careened into the station's parking lot and screeched to a stop. Glen and Nancy jumped out and raced into the station.

"I want to see Rod Lane again," Nancy said to the desk sergeant. Suddenly, she jumped around at the sound of her father's voice.

Thompson emerged from his office, rumped and yawning. "Dad, what are you doing here?"

"It so happens I work here," he said, "and there's an unsolved murder. I don't like unsolved murders—especially ones my daughter's mixed up in! What are *you* doing here at this hour?"

"Listen, sir," Glen said, "this is serious. Nancy had a nightmare about Rod being in danger or something, and so she thinks..." His voice trailed off under Thompson's glare.

"I just want to see if he's okay!" Nancy shouted.

"Take my word for it, Nancy," the sergeant said. "The guy's sleeping like a baby. He's not going anywhere."

§

Meanwhile, in Rod's cell, the bedsheet came alive. It twitched and pulsed, then snaked toward his throat. Rod stirred and the sheet fell still. When Rod slipped into deeper sleep, the sheet moved again—completing the noose around his neck!

§

Nancy made a dash for the cell block, but the door was locked. "This isn't your average nightmare, Daddy!" she cried. "Just go back and check—*please!*"

Thompson shrugged, then nodded to the sergeant.

"Right," the sergeant said, feeling his pockets. "Now where did I put that key..." The sergeant located the keys. Urged on by Nancy, he fumbled with the lock.

When he finally opened the door, Nancy sprinted past everyone and raced down the corridor. Then Nancy gazed into Rod's cell. She sank back in horror as the others caught up with her.

Rod was dead.

Thompson and the sergeant untied the sheet from Rod's neck. Rod slid down over the sergeant's shoulders, limp as a marionette with its strings slashed. Then they laid Rod at Nancy's feet.

Thompson looked at Nancy in eerie suspicion. "How'd you know he was gonna do this?"

Nancy just stood there and said nothing.

Four

A few days later, Rod Lane's casket was lowered into its grave. Nancy was present at the gravesite. So too were Lieutenant Thompson, Marge, Tina's mother and Rod's parents. They exchanged glances, as if they had gone through this *before* Tina and Rod were killed. When the brief ceremony was over, the mourners walked away from the grave.

"How's Nancy doing?" Thompson asked Marge.

"I don't think she's slept since Tina died," Marge replied. "She's always been a delicate kid."

"She's tougher than you think," Thompson said. "Any idea how she knew Rod was gonna kill himself?"

"No," Marge said. "All I know is this reminds me too much of ten years ago."

Thompson looked away. "Yeah, well, let's not start digging up bodies just because we're in a cemetery."

Thompson and Marge caught up with Nancy in the cemetery parking lot. Marge opened the car door for Nancy.



"The killer's still loose, you know," Nancy said in a small voice. A chill ran up Marge's spine.

"You saying somebody else killed Tina?" Thompson said. "Who?"

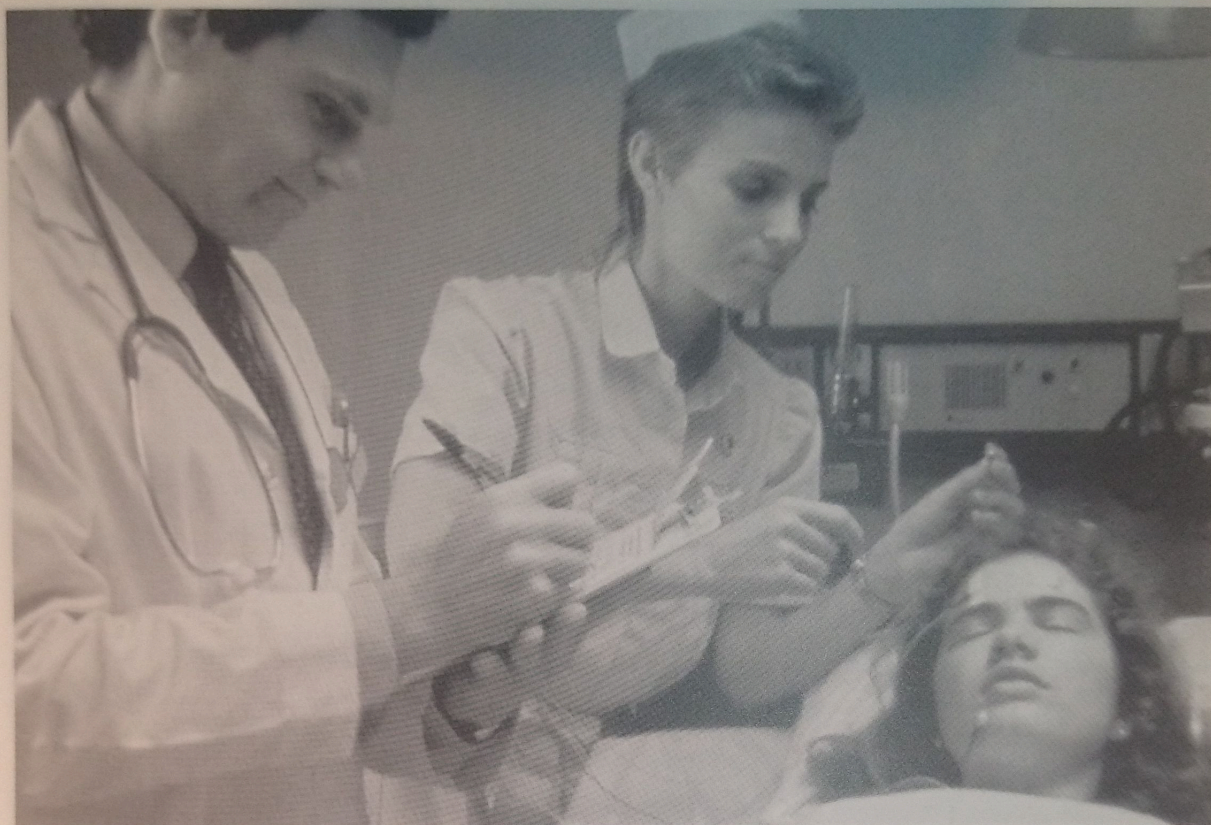
Nancy smiled eerily. "I don't know who he is. But he's burned, wears a weird hat, a black and red sweater, real dirty, and he uses some sort of knives he's got made into a sort of...glove. Like giant fingernails."

Marge's face drained completely of color.

"I think you should keep Nancy at home a few days," Thompson said to Marge.

"I got something better," Marge said, turning to Nancy. "I'm gonna get you help, baby. So no one will threaten you anymore."

Marge helped Nancy into the car. She locked the door, then climbed into the driver's seat and sped away.



§

The next day, Marge took Nancy to the Institute for the Study of Sleep Disorders. In a laboratory sleeping chamber, a nurse applied sensors to Nancy's body as she lay on a simple broad cot.

"But I just don't feel ready to sleep yet," Nancy complained. "Please, so I have to?"

"Don't worry," Doctor King said, "you're not gonna change into the Bride of Frankenstein or anything."

"I don't see why you couldn't just give me a pill to keep me from dreaming," Nancy said.

"Everybody's got to dream," Dr. King said. "If you don't dream, you go crazy. All set?"

"No," Nancy said.

"They're just simple tests, Nan," Marge said. "We'll both be right here."

Dr. King and Marge entered the observation room overlooking Nancy's sleeping chamber. King monitored Nancy with a bank of instruments—a mass of glowing dials, graphs and meters. King adjusted a dial, watching the EKG graph like a hawk. Then there was a slight alteration in the sound of the EKG.

King nodded in satisfaction. "Okay, good. She's asleep."

Marge looked into the sleeping chamber. Nancy was a motionless bundle in the middle of the cot. "What are dreams, anyway?"

"Mysteries," King said. "Incredible body hocus pocus. The truth is, we still don't know what they are or where they come from."

The EKG needle dipped to a lower reading.

"She's entering deep sleep now," King said. "All normal. She could dream at any time now. Right now she's like a diver on the bottom of an ocean no one's mapped yet—waiting to see what shows up."

A machine started chirping. King scanned it, liking what he saw. "Okay, she's started to dream."

"How can you tell?" Marge asked.

"R.E.M.'s," King replied. "Rapid eye movements. The eyes follow the dream. Their movement is picked up on this," he said, pointing to a dial. Then he pointed to a moving graph. The needle began waving lazily between plus and minus three.

King nodded assuredly. "Typical dream parameter," he said. "A nightmare, now, would be plus or minus five or six. She's just around three point—"

King stopped as the graph plunged, then surged well above the eight mark. Staring in disbelief, he rapped his finger on the glass that covered the graph. "This can't be," he said with alarm. "It never gets this high!"

Suddenly, a warning beeper pierced the air. The instruments lit up like a Christmas tree. In the sleeping chamber, Nancy contorted as if shot through with a thousand volts.

King knocked over his chair and sprinted for the door. Marge raced after him. When they reached Nancy, she was flailing and screaming as if the devil were after her. King grabbed her and shook her awake. Nancy's glazed eyes widened in terror.

Instantly, her fist shot out with incredible force, knocking King to the floor. King prepared a hypodermic needle in his quaking hands and struggled to his feet.

"Nancy!" Marge screamed at the top of her lungs. "It's Mom, Nancy!"

The glaze on Nancy's eyes disappeared. All that was left was terror and fury—but she was awake! Drenched in her sweat, Nancy stared around like a cornered animal, her purple face gasping out gut-wrenching sobs.

King approached with the needle. "Now this is just going to let you relax and sleep, Nan—"

With incredible swiftness, Nancy backhanded the hypodermic needle into a far wall, shattering it into a thousand pieces. "No," she said with fire in her eyes, "that's enough sleep."

"Okay, kid, okay," King said. "Fair enough."

Exhausted, Nancy sagged back on her pillow. Then King stared at her dumbfoundedly. Across her left forearm, four cuts bled freely, as if made by very sharp instruments.

"Get the kit!" King said to the nurse.

The nurse scrambled away as King clapped his hand over the wounds. Then he looked into Nancy's face. What he saw frightened him even more.

Nancy's haunted, ghost-like eyes turned from him to her mother. A terrible, chilling smile opened across Nancy's white lips. "You believe this?" she said.

Nancy pulled her free arm from beneath the sheets and revealed a strange hat, filthy and worn—the killer's hat!

The sight of it frightened Marge more than anything she had seen before. She turned deathly pale. "Where did you get that?"

Nancy stared at her. "I grabbed it off his head."

Marge stared at the hat as if it held her whole future—a future filled with horror.

§

The next day, Marge was on the telephone in her kitchen. She held the dirty hat in her free hand.

"She said she snatched it off his head in a dream!" Marge cried into the phone. Then she paused. "No, I'm not crazy—I've got the thing in my hand!" Again she paused. "I know we did, we all—" Marge heard Nancy approaching. "Gotta go," she said. Then she hung up the phone and stuffed the hat into a drawer.

Nancy entered the kitchen. The horrible events of the past week had taken their toll. Nancy's hair was ashen, her skin translucent, and her eyes dark-ringed. Her right forearm was heavily bandaged over the slashes.

Though she did her best to hide it, Marge was frightened of her daughter. "You didn't sleep, did you? The doctor says you have to sleep or you'll—"

"Go even crazier?" Nancy said, pouring a cup of black coffee.

"I don't think you're going crazy—and stop drinking that coffee!"

"Did you ask Daddy to have the hat examined?"

"I threw that filthy thing away," Marge said. "I don't know what you're trying to prove with it, but—"

Nancy stepped closer to her mother. "What I learned at the dream clinic—that's what I'm trying to prove. Rod didn't kill Tina, and he didn't hang himself. It's this guy—he's after us in our dreams."

"But that's just not reality, Nancy!"

Furious, Nancy yanked open the drawer before Marge can stop her. Nancy waved the hat triumphantly. "It's *real*, mama—feel it! His name is even in it...written right here...Fred Krueger...*Fred Krueger!* You know who that is, mama? You better tell me, 'cause now he's after me!"

"Fred Krueger can't be after you, Nancy," Marge said angrily. "He's dead!"

The room fell silent. Nancy and Marge stared at each other.

"Fred Krueger is dead," Marge insisted. "Dead and gone. Believe me, I know. Now go to bed. I order you, go to bed."

Nancy was furious. She felt betrayed. "You knew about him all this time, and you've been acting like he was someone I made up!"

Marge pulled away. "You're sick, Nancy. Imagining things. You need to sleep, it's as simple as that."

"Forget sleep!" Nancy said, racing to the front door.

"Nancy, it's only a nightmare!" Marge shouted.

"That's enough!" Nancy said. She stepped outside and slammed the door.

§

Nancy walked aimlessly down Main Street. There she spotted a survivalist bookstore. I'm into survival, she thought. She walked inside.

Nancy browsed until she came across a book titled *Booby Traps and Improvised Anti-Personnel Devices*. She studied the book and decided to buy it.

Nancy didn't return home until later that evening. When she did, she saw a utility truck pulling away from the curb. Then she looked at the house. "Oh, gross," she muttered. Every window had been covered with brand-new ornamental iron bars bolted deeply into their frames.

Nancy entered the house. "Mom," she shouted, "what's with the bars?"

Nancy found her mother propped up against the headboard of her bed, a crooked shadow of gloom. A fresh bottle of gin glinted in her hand.

"Oh, Mom..." Nancy said in despair. Nancy reached for the bottle, but Marge snatched it away. "What's with the bars?"

"S'curity," Marge said.

Nancy sat on the bed. "Mom, I want to know what you know about Fred Krueger."

"Dead and gone," Marge said.

"I want to know how, where—if you don't tell me, I'm going to call Daddy."

"Forget Fred Krueger. You don't want to know, believe me."

"I *do* want to know," Nancy said. "He's not dead and gone—he's after me! If I sleep, he'll get me! I've got to know!"

Marge blinked at her a moment, then cracked a terrible, crooked grin. "All right."

Marge dragged Nancy headlong down the cellar stairs and across the room with a crazy fury. "You want to know who Fred Krueger was? He was a filthy child killer who got at least twenty kids, kids from our area, kids we all knew. It drove us all crazy when we didn't know who was doing it—but it was even worse when they caught him!"

Marge drew herself up with a shake. "Oh the lawyers got fat and the judge got famous," she continued, "but someone forgot to sign the search warrant in the right place, and Fred Krueger was free, just like that."

"So he's alive?" Nancy asked.

Marge smiled grimly. "He wouldn't have stopped. The creep would've got more kids first chance he got. They found nearly ten bodies in his boiler room as it was! But the law couldn't touch him."

Nancy shivered in fear.

"What was needed were some private citizens willing to do what had to be done," Marge explained.

"What did you do, Mother?" Nancy said softly.

Marge cradled the gin bottle. "Bunch of us parents tracked him down after they let him go. Found him in an old boiler room, just like before. Saw him lying there in that caked red and black sweater he always wore, drunk an' asleep with his weird knives by his side..."

Nancy swallowed hard. "Go on."

"We poured gasoline all around the place, left a trail out the door, locked the door, then—*WHOOSH!*" Her arms shot up and her eyes widened with the light of that distant fire.

Then Marge dropped her arms. "But just when it seemed not even the devil could live in there any more, he crashed out like a banshee, all on fire—swinging those fingerknives every which direction and screaming he...he was going to get us by killing all our kids."

Marge stopped with a sudden quake and drank for a long moment. Her face bathed in tears, she looked at Nancy and shook her head. "There were all those men, Nancy—even your father, oh yes, even him. But none could do what had to be done—Krueger rolling and screaming so loud the whole state could hear—no one could take your father's gun and kill him good and proper. Except *me!*"

Marge swept her hand across the air in a terrific slash. Then she stopped, her hand shaking, her voice hoarse and terrified. "So he's dead, Nan. He can't get you. Mommy killed him."

Nancy took her mother in her arms and rocked her. "Who was there?" Nancy said. "Were Tina's parents there? Were Rod's?"

Marge sagged back. "Sure, and Glen's. All of us. But that's in the past now, baby. Really. It's over. We even took his knives."

Marge twisted around and opened the door on an old furnace. She fished inside the cavity. The next moment, she pulled out an object wrapped in rags. She opened it and displayed the long, rusted blades and their glove-like apparatus.

Nancy stared at the knives as a chill ran down her spine. "All these years you've kept those things buried down here? In our own house?"

"Proof he's declawed," Marge said. "As for him, we buried him good and deep." Marge shoved the gloves into their hiding place, then closed the little iron door. "So's okay, you can sleep." Marge lurched up and staggered up the stairs.

Nancy shivered and looked down at her arm. The cuts beneath her bandage began to bleed again. From inside the furnace, as if from deep below, the pulsing of the boundless nightmare-boiler room could be faintly heard.

Five

That night, Nancy called Glen from her bedroom.

"Hello?" Glen said.

"Hi," Nancy replied.

"Oh, hi, how ya doing?"

Nancy looked through the bars of her window. "Fine. Stand by your window so I can see you."

Glen moved into sight. "I heard your ma went ape at the security store today. You look like the Prisoner of Zenda or something. How long's it been since you slept?"

"Coming up on the seventh day," Nancy said. "it's okay, I checked Guinness. The record's eleven, and I'll beat that if I have to. Listen, I...I know who he is."

"Who?"

"The killer."

"You do?"

"Yeah," Nancy said. "And if he gets me, I'm pretty sure you're next."

"Me?" Glen said with alarm. "Why would anyone want to kill me?"

"Don't ask—just give me some help nailing this guy when I bring him out."

"Bring him out of what?"

"My dream."

"How do you plan to do that?"

"Just like I did the hat. Have a hold of the sucker when you wake me up."

"Me?" Glen said. "Wait a minute, you can't bring someone out of a dream!"

"If I can't," Nancy said, "then you all can relax, because it'll just be a simple case of me being nuts."

"I can save you the trouble. You're as nutty as a fruitcake. I love you anyway."

"Good, then you won't mind trashing this guy when I bring him out."

"What?" Glen said.

"You heard me. I grab him in the dream—you see me struggling so you wake me up. We both come out, you cold-cock him and we got him. Clever, huh?"

"Are you crazy? Hit him with what?"

"You're a jock. You must have a baseball bat or something. I'll give you a call just before midnight. Whatever you do, don't fall asleep!"

§

Ten minutes to midnight. Glen was in his room waiting for Nancy's call. So far, nothing.

He looked out his window. Nancy's house was dark. No sign of her. Glen shrugged then plopped on his bed. Then he put his earphones on and listened to some music.

§

Across the street, Nancy bit her lip as she dialed the phone. Glen's father answered. "May I speak with Glen, please?"

"Glen's asleep," he replied curtly. "Talk to him tomorrow." Then he hung up the phone.

Nancy dialed again. This time she got a busy signal. She slammed the phone down in frustration and looked out the window. "Glen," she said, "don't fall asleep!"

Nancy sat on the bed and yawned. Then the telephone rang. She snatched it up. "Glen?" she said.

All she could hear was the sound of scraping metal.

Nancy slammed the phone down as if it were diseased. Then in pure rage, she ripped the cord from the wall.

The telephone rang again!

Nancy shook so hard she could barely lift the receiver. Her teeth chattered as she lifted the receiver. "Hello?" she said feebly.

"I'm your boyfriend now," the ragged voice said.

Nancy smashed the telephone against the wall. She pinched herself hard, until the tears came and her flesh was nearly bleeding. "I'm awake, I *am* awake!" she said. "This is not a dream!" Then she stopped, realizing what Krueger meant. "My boyfriend!"

Nancy raced down the stairs and across the darkened living room to the front door. She fumbled with the lock, then realized the deadbolt was locked from the inside—and there was no key in it!

Nancy raced to a porch window and threw it open, shaking and banging on the bars like a mad woman. But it was no use. The bars wouldn't budge.

Nancy staggered back, stymied and furious. Then somebody moved behind her in the dark. "Locked," the voice said.

Nancy jumped around in shock. Her mother was sitting on the couch with her gin bottle. Nancy was furious. "Give me the key, mother."

"I don't even have it on me, so forget it," Marge said.

Nancy ran past her mother to the back door, then to every window in the house, slamming locks, shaking bars and screaming in a teenage fury. But it was no use. The house was her prison.

"Paid the guy good to make sure you stayed put," Marge said. "You ain't goin' nowhere, kid. You're gonna sleep tonight if it kills me."

Nancy clenched her fists and screamed at the top of her lungs—a heart-wrenching cry of love in despair. "GLEEENNNN!"

§

With the earphones still in place, Glen was sprawled on his bed, lying on a red and black bedspread. Nancy's cries filtered into the room, but Glen was breathing deeply and slowly, and he began to snore.

With tremendous force, two powerful arms shot up beneath the bedspread and grabbed Glen around the waist. Then his body was dragged down into the bed.

Glen's feet and arms shot up, but another powerful yank pulled him down. His hands clawed for a hold, but soon they vanished, dragging blankets and bedsheets, wires and stereo across the caved-in bed and into the abyss.

§

Feeling numb, Nancy stood at her window as the wail of a siren shattered the night on Elm Street. An ambulance screeched to a halt outside Glen's home. Two black and white police cars followed. So too did an unmarked car.

Thompson and Parker exited the unmarked car. Thompson glanced at his former home. Nancy gave a little wave.

Thompson waved back, then walked rapidly to Glen's house. Glen's father, pale as a ghost, waited on the porch. Glen's mother was wailing inside.

Nancy pulled the window shade on it all, then looked at her bed. "Okay, Krueger," she said in anger, "we play in your court."

Nancy went into the kitchen and picked up the phone. She dialed Glen's number. Parker answered the phone.

"This is Nancy," she said. "I want to speak with my Daddy. It's urgent."

There was a pause. Then Thompson took the phone. "Hello, Nancy," he said grimly.

"Hi, Daddy. I know what happened."

"Then you know more than I do."

"You know he's dead though, right?"

Another pause. "Yeah, apparently he's dead."

A tear trickled down Nancy's cheek, but her voice remained firm. "I've got a proposition for you. Listen very carefully, please. I'm gonna go get the guy who did it and bring him to you. I just need you to be right there to arrest him. Okay?"

"Just tell me who did it and I'll go get him, baby."

"Fred Krueger did it, Daddy, and only I can get him. It's my nightmare he comes to."

"Where'd you hear about Krueger?" he asked.

"I want you to come over here and break the door down exactly twenty minutes from now—can you do that?"

"Sure, but—"

"That'll be exactly half past midnight. Time for me to fall asleep and find him."

"Sure, sure, honey. You just do that—get yourself some sleep. That's what I've been saying all along."

Nancy hung up the phone and sank against the wall. She was frightened—but she was determined to stop Krueger once and for all!

With her survival book in hand, Nancy descended the stairs to the cellar. She pulled tools and hardware out with grim resolution: hammer, nails, spools of wire, an old square of heavy fishnetting, some old shotgun shells, a Lifesaver, and a file. She only had to look at the book once.

Barely able to control her shaking hands, Nancy strung the spool of wire across the living room. She wrapped bare lamp wire around two thumbtacks stuck into the sides of a clothespin. She inserted the Lifesaver between the prongs of the clothespin. One end of the fishing line was tied to the Lifesaver. It was stretched taut about three inches off the living room carpet.

Nancy took a lightbulb and filed a hole in it. She poured powder and shot from the shotgun shells into the bulb, then sealed it with tape. Nancy screwed the bulb back into the floor lamp, and placed the lamp at the foot of the stairs.

Walking upstairs, Nancy installed a sturdy sliding bolt to the outside of her bedroom door. Then she screwed a hinge into the wall directly above her door.

Finally, Nancy tiptoed to her mother's door and peeked in. Marge was propped in her bed looking back at Nancy. Marge was drunk.

"Guess I shouldn't a done it," Marge said.

"Just sleep now, Mom."

"Just wanted to protect you, Nan. Just wanted to protect you."

Marge slid over on her side. Nancy smoothed her mother's hair, covered her with a blanket, then left the room.

Once in her bedroom, Nancy turned out her bedside light, put on her nightgown, and knelt by her bed to say a prayer. Then she climbed into bed and pulled the blankets to her chin. She stared up at the ceiling for a long moment, then closed her eyes.

§

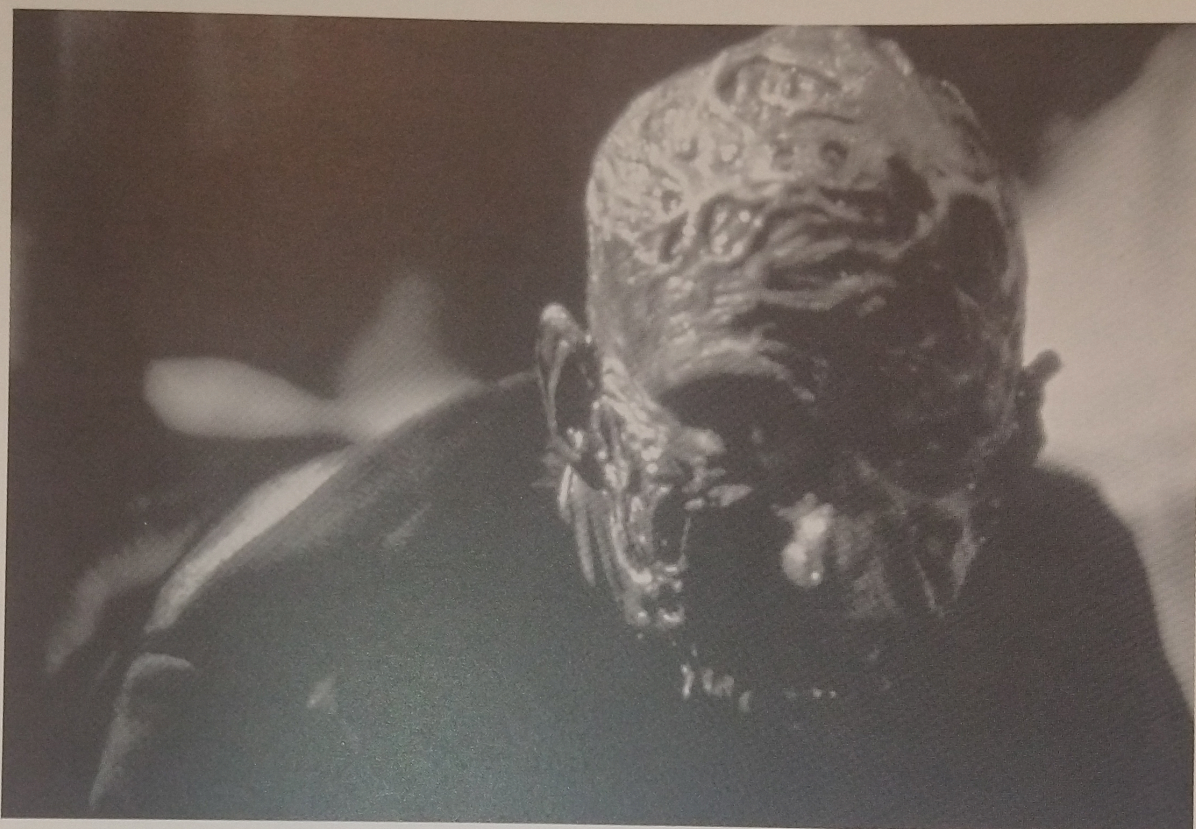
Lieutenant Thompson trudged down the stairs and confronted Glen's father. "I know it's hard to think at a time like this, Walter, but can you think of anyone who could've done such a thing?"

Walter stared blankly. "He done it," he said in a low, dull voice.

Thompson looked baffled. "Who? Who did that?"

"Krueger," Walter said.

"*Krueger?*" Thompson shouted in disbelief.



Walter flashed a strange look. "Had to've done it. No one else was in there." Then he looked down. "Maybe God's punishing us all."

Suddenly, a voice called out from upstairs. "Lieutenant Thompson? The Coroner wants to show you something."

Thompson looked at Walter, then dashed upstairs.

§

Nancy descended the cellar stairs and stopped in the center of the room. She could hear the distant sound of the boiler room, faint but unmistakable. She walked to a new door, opened it and looked down a set of steel stairs, firelight on her glum face. The sound of the boiler room was clear.



Nancy descended the stairs. She could hear the sound of knives from a lower level. She continued downward. Each stairway was narrower, each level was wetter, darker, and more airless. Soon she was gasping for air, but still she pushed on.

Nancy didn't stop until she reached the very bottom—a wet, firelit sump deep in the bowels of the boiler room. A dark wind souged and whined like a huge dying dog.

She turned suddenly and listened. Then, hearing nothing, she looked down and saw Glen's earphones. She gazed around. "Come out and show yourself, you creep," she said softly.

Just then, the sinister figure of Freddy Krueger lurched up behind her. He was even more hideous hatless, his ragged teeth barred, the great spider of razorblades flashing from his fingertips.

Krueger leaped at Nancy, but she leaped away just as fast—a fierce jump that sent her out over a black space and down a huge, dark cavern.

Suddenly, Nancy crashed out of the night and into a hedge just outside her front door. She staggered for the front door—but a moment later, Krueger crashed on top of her! Nancy struggled to her knees just as Krueger lunged at her with the handful of blades. But instead of running, Nancy ducked and seized Krueger in a desperate bearhug.

The surprise move sent Krueger pitching backward, and they fell into the jumble of torn-down trellis roses beneath her bedroom window. Just then, Nancy heard the jarring, deafening ringing of her alarm clock.

In the next instant, Nancy sprawled out of her bed onto the floor, twisting from the jabs of the vanished thorns. Gasping, she took a second to get her bearings. Then she snatched up the net, ready for an assault from any direction.

But the room was empty.

Hardly able to catch her breath, her hair tangled, her nightgown torn, Nancy dropped the net. She sat on the bed, turned on the bedside lamp and reexamined her room. No one there but herself. "I'm crazy after all," she muttered.

At that very instant, Freddy Krueger leaped up from the far side of the bed with an explosive shout of rage. He lunged across the bed for her. Nancy pitched back and scrambled for the window. But the bars prevented her escape.

Incredibly fast, Krueger regained his feet and leaped again. Nancy flung open the door and dived through—only to rebound off someone on the other side.

Knocked flying by Nancy's charge, Marge hit the floor hard. Nancy jumped over her mother, slammed her bedroom door, and locked the new bolt. Then she gingerly tied a string to the doorknob—a string that trailed down from the ceiling and attached to a hinge above the door.

When she was finished, Nancy dragged her mother to the next bedroom as fast as she could. She slammed the door and locked it as Krueger began splintering her bedroom door.

It did not take long for Krueger to break the bolt. Once he did, he ripped open the door. But in doing so, he pulled the string attached to the doorknob with terrific force.

The string jerked against a single-edged razor. It cut a tight wind of cord holding a twenty pound sledge hammer to the ceiling. The sledge hammer fell free, pivoting on the hinge at the far end of its handle. The hammer drove straight into Krueger's chest with a terrific blow. He catapulted backward with an incredulous shriek.

Despite his agony, Krueger clawed his way up, lurching forward like an enraged bull. He roared down the hallway—only to strike the length of wire strung across the hall, catching it just above the thigh. Krueger cartwheeled head-over-heels and landed flat on his back.

Enraged, Freddy crashed against Marge's bedroom door with a terrific force. Then he started smashing the door with his fists.

Nancy jerked open the bedroom window and jammed her face to the bars. "Help!" she cried. "Hey, Daddy—I got him trapped! Where *are* you?"

Parker, assigned to guard Glen's house, saw Nancy pounding on the bars. "Everything's gonna be all right!" he shouted. "Everything's under control!"

Nancy was livid. "Get my father, you creep!"

Suddenly, she heard the bedroom door splinter. Nancy whirled around and saw Krueger bull in. Her eyes flew open. She was trapped against the bars and had nowhere to go.

Krueger bunched his knives in a single thick blade and rushed her. Nancy screamed for her life.

But then Marge intercepted Krueger and grasped his weapon hand. "Nancy," she cried, "run!"

Nancy turned to the window. "Daddy, where are you?"

Six

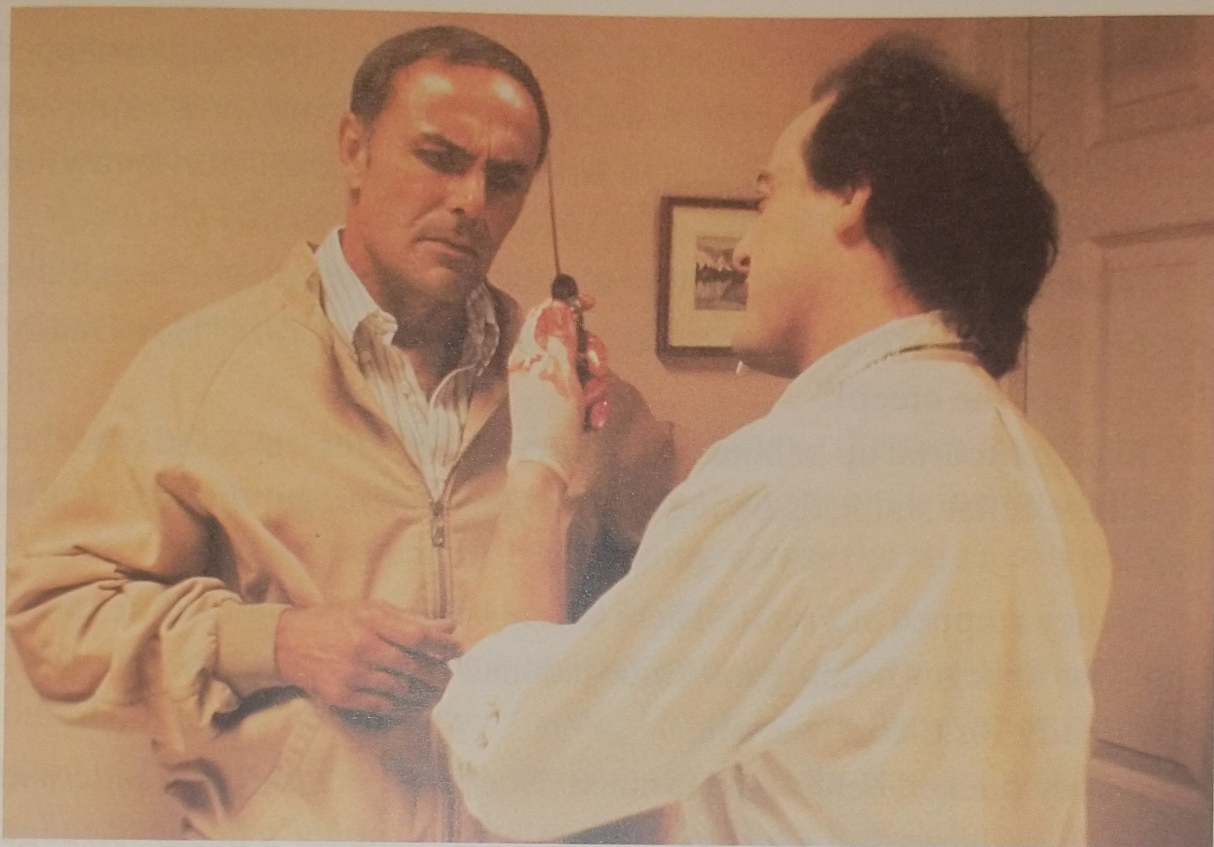
Parker saw Nancy and someone else fall just inside the window. "Poor woman's got her hands full with that kid," he muttered. "Maybe I better tell the lieutenant." He jogged into Glen's house and up the stairs to Glen's bedroom where Thompson was examining the scene. Just then the coroner walked in.

"Found you something, Donald," the coroner said to Thompson. "Should remind you of something."

The coroner shoved his hand out to Thompson. Thompson stared at the strange object in the coroner's hand, refusing to touch it. It was a long, thin steel blade, razor sharp, attached to some sort of ring and armature—broken off. "Only place I ever heard of such a thing before was ten years ago. Remember that lunatic Fred Krueger?"

Parker frowned. "Hey," he said to Thompson, "your daughter's acting kinda...strange!"

Thompson's eyes widened.



§

Krueger seized Marge and raised the deadly knives. Nancy wheeled behind him and struck him in the kidneys with her fists, spilling him back off the bed. Nancy rushed to the door. “Hey, pretty boy,” she said to Krueger, “can’t catch *me!*”

Enraged, Krueger howled after Nancy. Nancy cleared the hall and raced down the steps. Krueger lurched through the doorway after her.

Nancy crossed the living room and reached the front door, banging against it with terrified fury. “Come on,” she cried, “he’s in here! Daddy! Don’t let him kill me too!”

Krueger thumped down the stairs, his long fingernails scraping the wall. When he reached the main floor, Nancy dove behind the couch. Krueger’s feet hit another wire.

The Lifesaver jerked out of the clothespin and the tongs snapped together, completing the circuit with a crackling spark. An explosion ripped out of the floor lamp next to Krueger and knocked him sprawling across the room.

Nancy peeked out from behind the couch. Krueger lay in a smoking heap. Nancy ran to the window and screamed out again. "Hey Daddy! Hey! I got the creep!"

Krueger roared up behind her. Nancy bolted sideways and careened down the cellar stairs, throwing on the lights as Krueger thundered after her.

Nancy stopped at a wall. There was nowhere left to hide. She turned and saw Krueger holding his knife-laden fingers up for her.

"Ready for these?" he said.

Nancy ducked behind the furnace. She came out the other side with a jug of gasoline and smashed the jug over Krueger's head. Krueger staggered backward with a roar of fury, Nancy screaming after him with a box of stick matches.



She ignited the whole box and threw it at Krueger. In a blinding flash, Freddy went up in a terrific ball of fire. Nancy rushed past the howling maniac and ran up the stairs, Freddy after her in full pyrrhic rage.

When she reached the top of the stairs, Nancy slammed the door and bolted it. Freddy slammed the door again and again. His terrible screams and curses peaked, then grew weaker and more garbled. Finally, all was quiet.

Nancy staggered half blind from the kitchen. Smoke poured from everywhere. Nancy found her way to the living room window and saw her father and other police officers running across the street toward the house. "Dad," she cried, "get us out of here!"

Thompson and his men battered the front door down as black smoke poured out of the house. Once inside, Thompson pulled Nancy into the safety of his arms. But Nancy immediately fought free and headed for the kitchen, beckoning her father to follow. "I got him," she said. "I got Fred Krueger!"

Thompson stared in astonishment, then ran after her. The others followed, coughing and choking. But when they arrived in the kitchen, smoke poured from the cellar. The door was flat on the kitchen floor.

Frowning, Nancy wheeled around. She saw a series of tiny, isolated fires burn across the living room and up the stairs—Freddy's firesteps! "He's after Mom!" she cried. "Come on!"

Nancy and the others rushed up the stairs. They stopped in the splintered doorway of Marge's bedroom and gazed in horror. Freddy was aflame on Marge's bed.

Nancy let out a roar, grabbed a chair, and brought it down over Krueger's fiery back, stunning him. Thompson raced into the room with a blanket and threw it over Krueger and Marge. Then he fought the flames.



“He’s under there!” Nancy shouted. “Watch it!”

Thompson pulled out his .38 and yanked off the blanket. Marge’s body sunk through the mattress, then the bed solidified. Krueger had disappeared.

Thompson shoved his .38 into the holster. Then his shaking hands found a cigarette.

“Now do you believe me?” Nancy said glumly, her face as white as her ghostly hair.

Thompson left the room.

Nancy was about to join her father when she noticed a lump in the bed. The lump rose slowly—then suddenly, Freddy Krueger tore his way out.



"You think you was gonna get away from me?" he said.

Nancy shook her head with a strange calmness. "I know you too well now, Freddy."

Krueger smiled bitterly and raised the gleaming talons. "And now you die."

Nancy simply shook her head again. "It's too late, Krueger. I know the secret now. This is just a dream, too. You're not alive. The whole thing is a dream—so get lost! I want my mother and friends again."

Freddy grinned insanely, confused and amused at the same time. "You *what*?"

"I take back every bit of energy I ever gave you," Nancy said. "You're nothing."

Nancy turned her back on him. Freddy bunched his fingers, producing a single ragged bundle of razor talons. He raised his hand over the back of her head and neck.

Nancy closed her eyes and stepped to the door, her hand touching the doorknob. Freddy stabbed downward—and right through Nancy! Loosing his balance, Freddy fell down into an abyss and disappeared.

The nightmare on Elm Street was over.

Seven

The next morning, Nancy jerked open the front door of her house and stepped outside into the diffused light of a fog. "Wow, it's bright," she said to Marge.

Marge poked her head out the door, squinted, and nodded. "Gonna burn off soon or it wouldn't be so bright."

Nancy turned to face Marge. "Feeling better?"

Marge grinned. "No more drinking, baby. I just don't feel like it anymore. I didn't keep you up last night, did I? You look a little peeked."

Nancy smiled. "Nah. Just slept heavy."

Nancy waved and walked to the curb. Suddenly, a familiar convertible pulled up with the top down. Tina and Rod were in the back seat. They waved to Marge as Nancy climbed in the front.





"You believe this fog?" Glen called out from the driver's seat.

Marge laughed. "I believe anything's possible."

Tina slapped five with Nancy. "Lookin' good, girl!"

Nancy turned to face Glen. She was met with a terrible, scarred, hideous leer of a grin—Freddy Krueger's grin!

The convertible's top clamped over them—a bright red and black top that closed as fast and hard as a beartrap! Nancy's frightened face flew to the window, pressing against the thick glass as the car roared away from the curb and into the thick fog.

A Nightmare On Elm Street

Half-hidden by the fog, little girls were jumping rope nearby. They sang a strange and eerie song:

One, two—Freddy's coming for you!

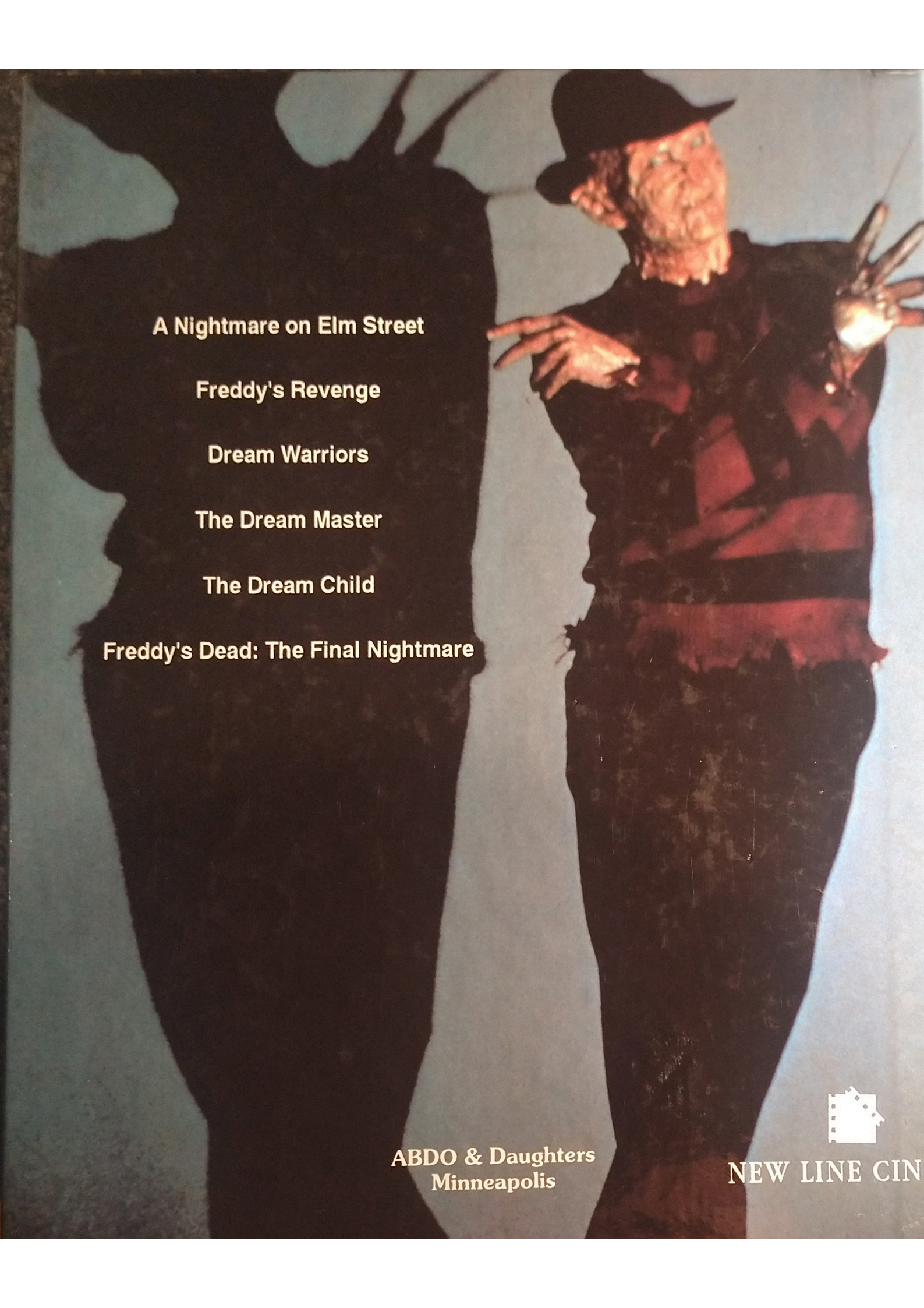
Three, four—better lock your door!

Five, six—get your crucifix!

Seven, eight—gonna stay up late!

Nine, ten—never sleep again!

A nightmare on Elm Street had begun again.



A Nightmare on Elm Street

Freddy's Revenge

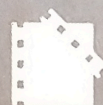
Dream Warriors

The Dream Master

The Dream Child

Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare

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